



MOOSE HILL COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2012

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Goal #1: LAND AROUND RESERVOIR

Strategy #1.1: State owns land. Town owns only 1 acre.

Develop potential acquisition planning tool to include review of resources repeatedly as funds are available and then not available year after year:

- **Federal:**

- Blackstone Valley National Heritage Corridor
- The Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (P.L.88-578) provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development and renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply. Nearly 4000 acres have been acquired and hundreds of parks renovated using the \$90.5 million that Massachusetts has received from the state side portion of the federal program since 1965. The Division of Conservation Services administers the state side Land & Water Conservation Fund program in Massachusetts. Access by the general public is required.
- US Department of Agriculture: Farmland & Ranchland Protection Program
History: This program has protected 85 farms on 6,335 acres with matching FRPP funding in the area of \$12 million in Massachusetts. Eligible organizations are Federally recognized Indian tribes, states, local government and non-governmental organizations to cooperate in the acquisition of conservation easements in prime, productive soils that are subject to a pending offer, for the purpose of limiting conversion to nonagricultural uses of the land. Requires a 50-50 match. Contact: Natural Resource Conservation Service
- United States Department of Agriculture Forest Legacy Program
History: Massachusetts has been involved in the program since 1993. Over 3200 acres have been protected in MA. Eligibility: Parcels of forest land within one of the designated "Forest Legacy Areas" must contain public benefits and environmental values identified in the Massachusetts "Assessment of Need". Up to 25% of the total acreage can include compatible non-forest uses as identified in the "Forest Legacy Program Implementation Guidelines" Title to the land can be held by either the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or the USDA Forest Service. Federal funding request for each project proposal can not exceed 75% of the total project cost. Project proponent is required to provide an additional 25% of nonfederal cost share toward the project proposal. www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/other/index.htm
- EPA Watershed Protection Grants
- US Fish and Wildlife Wetlands Conservation

- **State:**

- DEP Aquifer Land Acquisition Grants, Stormwater Mitigation Grants #319, and Water Quality #604b Grants
- DCR Recreational Trails Grant Program
- DCS Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Mass. Riverways Program Grants
- Mass. Environmental Trust Grants
- Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund
- The Commonwealth Capital (CC) policy of the Office for Commonwealth Development (OCD), for example, coordinates state capital spending programs that affect development patterns. Commonwealth Capital explicitly endorses planning and zoning measures that are in accord with state policy and

encourages municipalities to implement them by linking state spending programs to municipal land use practices. Each community gets a score that helps rank that community in applications for various grant programs, including land protection funding.

- *The Community Preservation Act (CPA)* *is an innovative tool for communities to address important community needs. Once adopted locally, the Act would require at least 10% of the monies raised to be distributed to each of three categories: historic preservation, open space protection and low and moderate income housing, allowing the community flexibility in distributing the remaining 70% of the money for any of the three categories as determined by the community.*
- *Massachusetts EOEA-DCS: Self-Help Conservation Land Acquisition Program* *Provides grant assistance to city and town conservation commissions for the acquisition of open space for conservation and passive recreation purposes.*
www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/selfhelp/default.htm
- *Massachusetts DCR: Forest Stewardship Program*
Encourages landowners to practice long-term guardianship through the development of a management plan for their woodlands. Provides grants to private forest landowners to protect forest ecosystems. Landowners, with the assistance of DCR foresters, develop a forest stewardship plan for their property, which makes them eligible for federal cost-sharing funds to help carry out the plan.
www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/service/index.htm
- *Massachusetts DFG: Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)*
Program is a partnership that provides private landowners interested in developing and maintaining wildlife habitat on their property with financial and technical assistance.
www.mass.gov/dfwele/drw/dfw_lip.htm
- **Regional:**
 - *Greater Worcester Land Trust*
 - *Common Ground Land Trust*
 - *Massachusetts Audubon Society*
 - *Trustees of the Reservation*
 - *Non-profit organizations are also often critical to the success of land preservation projects. These organizations may provide technical assistance to cities and towns by writing grant applications or in negotiations with landowners. They may also help financially by paying for appraisal reports or preliminary design work, fundraising for the local share of the project, or purchasing and holding the land until the community is ready to proceed. The Conservation Partnership Program is a grant program that provides reimbursements to non-profit organization of up to 50% of the cost of acquiring land or interest in land for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.*
 - *Massachusetts EOEA: Conservation Partnership Grants*
To assist not-for-profit corporations in acquiring land and interests in land suitable for conservation or recreation.
www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/default.htm
- **Local:**
 - *Landowners:* *Federal tax incentives affecting donations of conservation easements.*
The incentives:

Increase the deduction a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of adjusted gross income to 50%; Allow qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income; Extend the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years. For more information on the tax changes visit the Land Trust Alliance web site at www.lta.org

- ***Municipal Land Acquisition Funds:***

Municipalities can also establish a separate town fund that can be increased through several avenues, including:

An annual fixed line item in the municipal budget
Income from forestry, farming and leasing of town owned land

Gifts and bequests

Grants and foundation funding

Passage of the Community Preservation Act

Finally, municipalities can borrow money through bonding approved at town meeting to purchase open space. This money may be in addition to other monies the town has been able to obtain towards purchases.

Strategy #1.2: Rules for use of land.

Review of Current valid restrictions. Review of Enforcement. Damage Control/review.

- *Partner with Mid State Trail committee (trail goes over the dam)*
- *Contact state and have sit down to determine what is feasible going forward*
- *Have written suggested rules ready for critiquing with State*
- *Bring in USDA original engineer who is respected and can assist with validity.*
- *Define recreational use then and now*
- *Define acceptable/not accepted use and by whom*
- *Respect natural beauty and biodiversity of the area*
- *Always, always, always, protect the water*
- *Research Mass Historic site for Grist Mill*

Strategy #1.3: Annual Maintenance of land.

- *Review what State does currently; become part of the process.*
 - *Mowing*
 - *Tree/brush clearing*
 - *Valdalism*
 - *Signage*
 - *ATV damage*
 - *Other*

Goal #2 WHAT IS USE OF WATER FOR FUTURE.

Strategy #2.1: Meet with Water Districts at least annually.

Strategy #2.2: Water Protection

- *Though it is not a water supply; seek ways to protect the future as such*
- *Find ways to be notified of area activity before Conservation, Planning, Board of Health etc.*
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I'LL LET KURT DO MORE TO THIS ONE....

Goal #3 PUBLIC RELATIONS AWARENESS

Strategy #3.1: Create feeling of value within the community boards.

- *Assure ongoing as part of Open Space Plan with Conservation Commission*

- *Assure ongoing as part of Master Plan with Planning Board*
- *Work with Police department on maintaining order on the land and water*
- *Work with new community leaders as they are elected/appointed to bring them up to date.*

Strategy #3.2; Create feeling of value within the community as citizens who were part of original plan are aged.

- *Assure public participation in future of Moose Hill*
- *Library Display creation and put in place once a year*
- *Lecture in Schools*
- *Handouts at town meetings*
- *Lecture before Business Association*
- *Create Moose Hill Awareness Day*
- *Partnership with Rod and Gun Club*
- *Partnership with Common Ground Land Trust*
- *Wetlands and Watershed Awareness: In order to better appreciate our natural resources, we need to understand their function and purpose. More often than not, people don't understand how wetlands and water resources work to their own personal and municipal potential benefit. The Conservation Commission consistently encounters a lack of public understanding of the important role that wetlands play in protecting ground water supplies, controlling pollution, providing wildlife habitat and flood control. Thankfully, chronic flooding and sedimentation are not significant problems in town due to the existence of so many healthy wetlands and bogs. It is the hope and expectation that with some public education about these issues there will be a greater motivation to protect our natural resources at the region, town, and backyard level.*

Strategy #3.3: Annually review success of Public Relations plan for what was done, what is needed.

Strategy #3.4: Create materials for distribution

- *Help from Land Trusts*
- *Help from Schools*
- *LCAC (put together a video)*
- *Other media*
- *Others*

Strategy# 3.5: Get accurate data map of Moose Hill to be the map to use in all PR campaigns, grant seeking, etc.

- *CMRPC*
- *Storm Water: GIS*
- *Other sources*